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| IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE | Application Number | PCT/AU00/01022 |
| | Filing Date | August 29, 2000 |
| | First Named Inventor | Colin John Hunter |
| | Group Art Unit | Unassigned |
| | Examiner Name | Unassigned |
| | Attorney Docket Number | 2145-133 |
| Title of the Invention: Improved Bacterial Oxidation of Sulphide Ores and Concentrates | | |

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

Dear Sir:

Please amend the above-identified application as follows.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 1-17 and substitute the following new claims.

18. A process for bacterial oxidation of sulphide ores or concentrates characterised in that an ore or concentrate is leached with a mixed bacterial culture operative across a temperature range of about 40 to 65 °C, the mixed bacterial culture having been adapted to the ore or concentrate prior to leaching.

19. A process according to claim 18, characterised in that the ore or concentrate is leached with the mixed bacterial culture in a heap leach, tank leach, vat leach or dump leach.

20. A process according to claim 18, characterised in that the ore or concentrate is either of a base metal, a precious metal or platinum group metal.

21. A process according to claim 18, characterised in that the sulphide ore or concentrate contains chalcopyrite.